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Poland

Trade Policy Monitoring

Poland's reaction to proposed EU Fruit and Vegetable Sector Reform

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Approved by:

Ed Porter, Agricultural Counselor
U S Embassy

Prepared by:

Jolanta Figurska

Report Highlights:

Polish fruit and vegetable sector experts strongly oppose the EU's proposed fruit and vegetable program reforms. They believe the reforms favor the "old EU 15" member states. They stress that there is no support for soft fruits, very important to Poland, and not enough support for new producer groups.

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Polish fruit and vegetable sector experts have expressed very negative views towards the proposed reforms to the EU fruit and vegetable regime. Most contacts said that not only will Poland's agriculture not gain anything from these reforms, but that it will actually be harmed because the reforms really offer support only to producer groups that are well developed, such as those in the "old EU 15" member states. Sector experts also noted that the EU rejected the Polish proposition concerning financial support for soft fruits. Government contacts expressed similar views, including the lack of support for soft fruit. Support for soft fruits is very important to Poland. Poland accounts for over 70 percent of total EU soft fruit production.

Contacts complained that the proposal does not contain enough support for new producer groups. They believe the proposal will only really benefit those countries (e.g. Denmark, The Netherlands, Germany and France) that have established producer groups. Poland has only about 80 locally registered producer groups and seven EU registered producer organizations. Only about 2 percent of agricultural production in Poland originates from producer groups, as compared to about 80 percent in Denmark. Since 2005 Poland has been submitting proposals the EU to stimulate farmers to create or join producer groups without much success.

Poland is very interested in the proposed reforms to the EU fruit and vegetable sector. Poland is the fourth largest producer of fruits and vegetables in the EU and accounts for about 5 percent of total EU production. In early 2005, Polish officials requested EU action against what they considered unfair competition from low-priced Chinese frozen strawberries. The EU finally took action in October 2006, when temporary anti-dumping protective measures against imports of Chinese frozen strawberries were implemented.

In summary, the Polish fruit and vegetable industry believes that the proposed EU reforms:

- Will not only not benefit Polish producers, but actually hurt them;
- Favor EU-15 countries at the expense of the newer member states; and
- Do not offer enough support for soft fruit producers and incentives to establish new producer groups.